

**Charter Transition Team Meeting
October 23, 2007
4:30 PM
Library Conference Room, 6th Floor**

Attendance:

Members: Legislator Gary Bischoff, Chairman
Legislator Robert Parete - *excused*
Legislator Phil Terpening
Legislator Wayne Harris - *excused*
Dr. Gerald Benjamin, SUNY New Paltz - *excused*
Marianne Collins, SUNY Ulster
Louis Klein, Attorney

Staff: Auditor's Office – Lisa Cutten
County Attorney's Office – Bea Havranek, Eric Stock
Legislative Staff – Meg Dellay

Public: Renee Sachs – LWV; Emily Johnson – Youth Board; Allan Wikman

Highlights:

- 1. Administrative Code (Bea)**
- 2. Recommendations from Jail Investigation Report**
- 3. Financial Structure**
- 4. Mark Thomas Report**
- 5. State Rep Letter**
- 6. Other**

Gary called the meeting to order at 4:35pm.

1. Administrative Code – Bea distributed the DRAFT proposal of Administrative Code with revision changes that members had suggested last month. Handout included Local Law No.1 of 1976 and Local Law No.3 of 1982.

The following points were discussed:

- Vacancy of elected officials (p.6, C) – added to cover office of District Attorney, Sheriff, County Clerk or Treasurer, with notation regarding the office of Treasurer being abolished on December 31, 2009.
- Chairman Ex Officio (p.9, § A2-12) – quorum clarified.
- Organizational Meeting date (p.11, A) – Bea explained the date of January 8th reflected state law (in red). **Gary moved to change it to the second Tuesday in January to match the Charter. All agreed.**
- Vice-Chairman in the absence of Chairman (p.11, C) – Gary asked for further clarification regarding short or long absences. Bea will provide.
- Powers and duties of Chairman (p.6, A, #2) – Marianne pointed out the need for clarification of appointments by the Legislature vs. the Executive. After much

discussion, **all agreed to insert (in quotes):** To authorize attendance “**by Legislators and Legislative staff, including appointments by the Legislature.**”

- Powers and duties of Chairman (p.6, A, #4) – **All agreed to delete “all” in two places in first sentence...**to then read: **To appoint members of boards, commissions, etc.**
- Decorum (p.13, G, #2) – **add “in absence of Vice-Chairman.”**
- Decorum (p.13, G) – add #3 to cover a personal attack by a Legislator and removal at the Chairman’s discretion – Bea working on.
- Privilege of the Floor (p.14, J #1) – insert email or electronic means – Bea researching definitions.
- The Vote (p.14, L) – **after discussion over meaning, all agreed to delete entire item.**
- Majority Vote (p.15, O) – discussion over what the total vote of the Legislature means; **all agreed to eliminate the word “vote.”**

2. Jail Investigation Report - Gary announced Tracey Bartels and John Mavretich will be attending the November meeting to discuss the recommendations of the Special Committee to Investigate the Planning, Pre-Planning, and Construction of the Ulster County Law Enforcement Facility, specifically those relevant to the Charter Transition Team. All members of the Charter committee received a copy of the full report last month. A handout of the first 19 pages of the Report, plus pages 58 and 59, were distributed. Gary asked all members to read the handout and to be prepared to discuss Capital Project Oversight and best practices in the future form of government.

3. Financial Structure – Gary invited Lisa Cutten, Auditor, to share her ideas about financial affairs in relation to the Charter. Lisa sees two distinctions: 1) auditing claims and 2) the Comptroller who audits everything. Currently as auditor, she reviews all claims. However, there is no review of payroll or social services. Audits of departments and agencies are missing now. There will be a need for a professional staff to do what the Charter mandates. Lisa researched Dutchess County’s model of two Senior Auditors and six Auditors with salaries in the mid-50s to high 60’s. Lisa sees a need for a budgetary control person to monitor internal affairs. Charter is not clear on this function. The Charter specifies the Comptroller shall audit all records and may audit any department or program to assess its efficiency or effectiveness.

Handouts of the organizational charts of the Treasurer’s Office and Audit’s Office, plus first version of county org chart, were distributed to aid in the discussion. (These handouts were given out at previous meetings.) The importance of checks and balances was discussed, both within the county government and overseeing county government.

Bea added that she and Adele Reiter, Deputy Treasurer, are reviewing the Financial Procedures and role of Comptroller in other counties. Lisa was invited to join them in the process. Meg will supply Lisa with Administrative Codes from other counties related to financial affairs.

4. Mark Thomas – Meg verified that all members received the email minutes of October 1st meeting with Mark Thomas, with special mention of his suggestion to use Erie County (rather than Chautauqua County) as a model for Comptroller position.

5. State Rep Letters – Gary distributed two response letters to his second request to state reps for charter funding. The first letter was from Senator Bonacic – with no success. The second one from Senator Larkin stated the difficulty in determining the availability of funding so early in the budget process. **see attachment**

6. Other – Gary found a letter from Dorothy Martin, Director of Real Property Tax Service Agency dated April 2007. In the letter, Dorothy states that her concerns had been addressed by Bea and appropriate changes to the Charter were made prior to its passage. **see attachment**

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 27, 2007 at 4:30pm, Library Conference Room.